



Law Office of the
PUBLIC DEFENDER

Seventeenth Judicial Circuit

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June 28, 2011

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Laura K. Moneyham
Assistant Secretary, Residential Services
Department of Juvenile Justice
2737 Centerview Drive, Suite 2219
Tallahassee, FL 32399-3100

Re: Abuse Report
Palm Beach Juvenile
Correctional Facility

Dear Ms. Moneyham:

I am alarmed that since my last visit several youth at the Palm Beach Juvenile Correctional Facility have been contacted by TJ Mauer, Facility Manager of Youth Services International and Gary Mogan, Administrative Review Specialist from the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice. It is troubling when children reporting abuse are confronted in a manner calculated to threaten them directly or indirectly. The integrity of any investigation conducted in such a manner effectively erodes the children's and public's confidence in the process and further jeopardizes the children's safety.

My concerns about the supervision, safety and health of the children in this residential program are once again heightened given the Department's inability to competently and confidentially investigate claims of misconduct. The children are in a vulnerable position, and in this case they are also captive and in direct contact with those that may be responsible for the misconduct. As such, the confidences of the youth who allege abuse must be the first priority, and they must be shielded from acts of intimidation or retaliation from staff or other youth.

It is apparent that your investigators and facility manager are not mindful of this fact. Youth and staffers are clearly aware of the allegations previously lodged and have attempted to identify the reporting child. Children are being ostracized by staff and other committed youth as a result.

I am appalled to hear that attempts have been made by facility administrators to frustrate the release of documents that directly address the level of medical attention provided to the children. Administrators at the facility have contacted a parent who then abruptly withdrew consent to

the release of medial information. Parents and children should not be manipulated and threatened in an effort to influence an investigative finding. This conduct is highly disturbing, and atrocious.

The issues that were raised in my previous correspondence have not been adequately addressed as evidenced by the ongoing pattern at this facility. The morning of my June 9, 2011 visit, an altercation allegedly took place in the Alpha dorm. I was not permitted to speak with youth in that dorm since no child on my visitation list resided there. There was allegedly a riot in the outside recreation area sometime in April of 2011. Sometime later, youth S.S. was allegedly punched by a staffer that resulted in several youth fighting with staff. Youth S.S. was ultimately arrested from the facility and transported to jail.

It is my understanding that the incident involving youth S.S. was captured on video. Be advised that I am hereby requesting within 10 days of the receipt of this correspondence a copy of the video of the incident involving S.S. and staffers that occurred in the cafeteria area that resulted in arrest(s) of youth at the facility.

This facility must be immediately reviewed by competent investigators who will ensure the integrity of the investigation, so that the concerns raised are properly addressed. I would strongly encourage you to look closely at this facility, its administration and your investigators since a disturbing trend seems to be continuing.

Thank you kindly for your immediate attention to this matter. If you have any questions please feel free to contact me at 954-831-8636.

Sincerely,

Gordon H. Weekes, Jr.